

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Annual Subscription: \$3.00

17, ROUTE DE MALAGNOU, GENEVA

297 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10

Printed in the U. S. A.

Tel.: GRamercy 5-3475 — Cable Address: "Worcil"

under the auspices of

the WORLD COUNCIL of CHURCHES (in process of formation)

the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES

the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 39

Fourteenth Year

November 7, 1947

Christian Youth Leaders Conference

Christian youth leaders from 12 countries gathered from October 27-30, at Presinge, near Geneva, under the auspices of the Youth Department and the Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches to evaluate the spiritual and material needs of young people, and to consider ways and means of broadening the scope of church youth activities. Participants made tentative plans for international youth camps in Germany, Italy, Hungary, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and France; for exchange of Christian youth leaders; for national youth training programmes; for publication and exchanges of literature.

Representatives from the German Churches and from Allied Military Authorities in Germany pointed out the disillusionment, lack of leadership, and feeling of isolation among the German youth. "An excellent opportunity existed in 1945 to persuade a reasonable proportion of German youth to follow the Christian way", said Mr. David Stevens, responsible for religious youth affairs in the British Zone, "but the opportunity is becoming progressively less, so that the problem becomes more urgent. German youth must be invited out of their country, have an opportunity to attend leadership trainint camps and work camps, exchange literature with countries abroad, and have contact with other youth through correspondence and joint projects". Among other projects proposed to achieve these ends is an international training course at Bad Boll, to which 80 to 100 foreign youth leaders will be invited. "All expenses will be paid once they are within the German border, we only ask for food to be provided", said Manfred Müller, head of youth activities of the German Evangelical Church. "It is one way in which we can repay the other countries for their kindness to us in these post-war days".

L.E. Norrie, head of youth activities for the American Military Government, noted the fast growing youth movements in all four zones of occupation. "At the present time, 43% of the 1 1/2 million organised youth in the American zone; and 60% of the 800,000 in the British zone are members of church groups", he said.

Attending the conference were representatives from Austria, Belgium, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., World's Student Christian Federation, and Allied Military Authority. Some of the proposals discussed were a Hungarian request for 20 to 30 young people for a summer work camp, the possibility of youth consultation teams to visit all countries and discuss with church youth leaders their problems, methods of working more closely with industrial youth. A particularly interesting proposal was the invitation of the Italian Protestant youth for volunteer young workers to cooperate with them in the construction of "Agape", the youth community centre where young people throughout the world can realise in practical living the principles of Christian brotherhood.

The sentiment of the conference was voiced by Miss Jean Fraser of England, Secretary of the Youth Department and co-chairman of the conference, when she said that "although financial help was essential to realise many of the projects, even if it were not forthcoming, youth work would go on."

The spirit of the conference may be illustrated by the statement of the Czech representative: "We remember what we had to go through ourselves, he said. Consequently we understand the present German situation better than if we had not suffered. It is humiliating to us all to know how far human civilisation has gone. We will not forget the Germans, we shall pray for them and I hope that you will give priority to their needs rather than to ours."

The conference was the outgrowth of the World Conference of Christian Youth held this summer at Oslo and the following-up conference at Lund. It is proposed that similar area planning conferences be held in other regions in the near future.

E.P.S.Geneva

News Sheet of the Youth Department

The Youth Department of the World Council of Churches has just published the first number of its new "News Sheet", which is to appear every two months. In a word of greeting addressed to the readers for whom this news sheet is intended, the General Secretary of the World Council, Dr W.A. Visser 't Hooft, describes the task of the Youth Department (on the basis of its statutes) as "the attempt to unite the church youth movements in a world-wide community, and to build up this community as a direct expression of the faith and life of the young membership of the Churches; this fellowship to be part of the wider fellowship of the Churches in and through the World Council of Churches, in cooperation with the Christian youth movements which shared in the Oslo Conference in the summer of 1947. This is not merely a good idea and an interesting adventure but a definite task, to which the present younger generation in the Church is called by the Lord of the Church."

The secretary of the Youth Department, Miss Jean M. Fraser, describes the monthly News Sheet as "a channel of communication" between church youth leaders and groups in many countries. "Like everything else in the Youth Department, such a News Sheet, to embrace youth of all Churches in all parts of the world, has never been attempted before... We must build up a News Sheet with a character of its own. It will not happen in one issue or two. It will depend on world-wide cooperation."

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The General Secretary of the World Council of Christian Education, Dr Forrest L. Knapp, says in his introductory remarks: "One of the great tragedies in our Churches is that so much good experience in youth work is known only to the few, not to the many. The News Sheet will be a channel through which that tragedy can be corrected. I am sure the blessings of success will attend the work of the Youth Department and of this, one of its first projects, because the officers of the Department are listening to the Voice of God."

The first number publishes an account of the World Youth Conference at Oslo and the Faith and Order movement. It describes the nature and composition of the World Assembly to be held at Amsterdam in 1948. And finally there is a programme for Christian education, which has been worked out by Dr G. Baez-Camargo (Mexico) in the light of the experiences of the big Christian conferences held last summer.

Copies should be ordered where possible from national church youth secretaries or from the Youth Department, 17 route de Malagnou, Geneva. The cost is 2 Sw.fr. (2/6d, 50 cents, etc.)

E.P.S. Geneva

New President of World's Y.W.C.A.

At the Council meeting of the World's Y.W.C.A. which has just closed at Hangshow, China (see E.P.S. No. 36) Miss Lilace R. Barnes of the United States was elected President in place of Miss C.M. van Asch van Wijck.

Miss Barnes is from Chicago and served for 8 years as President of the Y.W.C.A. in that city. She has also served as volunteer metropolitan secretary of the Student Department of the National Y.W.C.A. of U.S.A. and was elected to the National Board in 1936. In 1945, on a visit to Geneva to attend the Executive Meeting of the World's Y.W.C.A. she also visited a number of European countries on behalf of the National Board of the Y.W.C.A. of U.S.A. to investigate on conditions in liberated countries.

E.P.S. Geneva

U.S.S.R.

The Theological Colleges - The Concern of all Christians

The Rector of the Theological Academy in Moscow, Professor S.W. Savinkov, who is also the leader of the Moscow Priests' Seminary, writes a detailed report in Volume 7 of the "Newspaper of the Moscow Patriarchate" concerning the creation of a scholarship fund, to facilitate the education of future priests. This fund consists of contributions which have been paid into the fund every month by the parishes of Moscow since January 1st, 1947. By the beginning of February the money collected amounted to 100,000 roubles, and since then it has been increased by large donations from several diocesan committees who "on their own initiative gave direct assistance to the young church colleges in their efforts to improve the provisions for the right fulfilment of their task." Thirty-thousand roubles were contributed in this way by the Bishop of Krasnodar and the Kuban.

The Patriarch is anxious that the scholarship fund shall not be treated as untouchable capital, of which only the interest is available for use. The intention is rather that the capital itself shall be distributed. In order to

ensure that the capital shall not dry up, the generosity of the faithful must become a moral duty to allocate a definite proportion of their current income to the scholarship fund, which will thus always be maintained. The example of the Moscow parishes, who have promised to support the fund with regular contributions, is so encouraging that the method adopted by them may be recommended, even if the fund fluctuates, and sometime has more, sometime less, cash in hand.

The Commission which is responsible for organising the scholarship fund therefore sent an appeal to all the Bishops, asking them to suggest that the parishes in their dioceses should do the same. In this way the theological colleges of the Orthodox Church will become the general concern of all Christians.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

Insecurity

A Berlin periodical called "Horizon" publishes an article in its October number, attacking the denunciations in Germany.

"The general conditions and the loss of dignity", says the article, "have already gone so far, that one is never safe from slanderous denunciations, even in the closest circles of friends. Minutes of the discussions between the Roman Catholic youth leaders of Saxony are said to have been in the hands of the political police within a few hours. The day after, Otto Gallus, of the Christian Democratic Union, who took an active part in Catholic youth work, had disappeared without leaving a trace. A 21-year-old student of theology in Leipzig, Werner Ihmels, of the same Christian Democratic Union, son of the Director of the Leipzig Evangelical Mission, and the liaison-officer between the Free German Youth and the Protestant Church leaders of the Province of Saxony, was shadowed for days by German civilians, and has completely disappeared since September 16th. A number of 16 and 17-year-old schoolboys belonging to his circle were arrested by the German police. German police also examined the flats of persons doing Christian youth work. No official explanation has yet been received."

E.P.S. Geneva

INDONESIA

Independent Churches

Between 1930 and 1940 a number of Protestant Churches in Indonesia have formed themselves into independent Churches. The first one to do so was the Batak Church in 1930. The Church in the Eastern part of Java, and some others, soon followed suit. A few months ago the Church of the Island of Sangir was constituted and on October 18, the Church of the Toradjas at Posso, in the island of Celebes.

On October 31, the Church of Timor also became independent, but will continue to be part of the Protestant Church of Indonesia. It has 200,000 members. The President of the Committee of the Protestant Church of Indonesia, Pastor H.H. van Herwerden, and some representatives of the Government of Batavia and of Western Indonesia, were present at the ceremony.

E.P.S. Geneva

Travels of the General Secretaries of the I.M.C.

As a follow-up of the Conference of the International Missionary Council held at Whitby, Canada, in July, the London Secretary of the International Missionary Council, Rev. Norman Goodall, and the New York Secretary Dr J.W. Decker, will undertake long trips in different parts of the world.

The purposes of their trips are to follow-up the Whitby Conference through consultation with church and mission leaders for an advance movement in evangelism; to strengthen the National Christian Councils in local support, personnel and programme; to cooperate with Church World Service in its material relief, personnel rehabilitation, and rural reconstruction programmes.

Dr Decker left the United States on October 15 and will arrive in Manila in the middle of November. He will be visiting also Shanghai, Bangkok, Tokyo and Seoul. He will especially have the responsibility of discussing with representatives of the Christian Councils the desirability of regional organisation to coordinate and strengthen the Christian movement in East Asia. Dr Decker will be back in the U.S.A. at the end of March 1948.

Mr. Goodall will leave London in the middle of November. He will visit North and South India, Ceylon, Burma, New Zealand and Australia. In addition to the strengthening of the National Christian Councils, he will take part in the Preparatory Conference to be held in Sydney for the missionary and church work in the South West Pacific. He is expected back in England in the Spring of 1948.

E.P.S.Geneva

UNITED STATESIncreased Help for Relief and Reconstruction

According to Dr. A.L. Warnshuis, Executive Vice-President of Church World Service, the Protestant and Orthodox Churches of America sent more than 13,000,000 pounds weight of relief and reconstruction supplies abroad through Church World Service. This total, valued conservatively at \$5,350,000 included both contributed supplies and goods purchased with funds donated by Churches and individuals.

Dr Warnshuis said that Church World Service, on behalf of the American Churches, is asking the millions of new and old contributors to aim at a total of 20,000,000 pounds weight for 1947. In 1946 about 11,000,000 were shipped through this interdenominational organisation. "It is feared that the approaching winter may be the severest yet experienced in either Europe or Asia", he declared. "Americans must increase their efforts to avert disaster in these areas."

E.P.S. Geneva

NETHERLANDSMeeting of Bible Translators

The Dutch Bible Society held an international conference of Bible translators at Woudschoten, near Zeist, from October 16 to 21. Among the participants was M. E.A. Nida, secretary of the translation department of the American Bible Society, whose book on the translation of the Bible has just appeared. His colleague from the British Bible Society, Canon N.D. Coleman, was also

present. The conference was attended by delegates from the following countries: Denmark, England, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States.

The conference decided to recommend all the translators to base their studies on the masoretic text in the case of the Old Testament, and on the Nestle edition in the case of the New Testament.

This international conference provided an opportunity for contacts to be made between Bible translators from many different countries. It sent a number of suggestions to the United Bible Societies as to how these contacts might be strengthened. Furthermore the United Bible Society has been asked to study the possibility of translating the Bible into every language in the world. It is estimated that there are 2,500 languages in existence. Up to the present the whole Bible has been translated into 185 languages, and part of the Bible into 1,090.

E.P.S.Geneva

GREECESunday Schools

In spite of the difficult situation in Greece today, the Sunday schools have made fresh progress since last year. In Athens the schools organised by the "Zoe" movement now number 190, as compared with 143 in 1946 and 111 in 1945. In the whole country there are 622 such schools, with 90,000 pupils.

In addition to this, 57,000 children have attended special courses of religious instruction given by theological students, by professors, and by young laymen who have had a special training for this work. E.P.S.Geneva

YUGOSLAVIAInitiative of the Reformed Pastors

The Reformed pastors of Hungarian origin in Yugoslavia have sent a memorandum to the Reformed Synod of Hungary, asking them to look into the question of introducing a Church constitution to include all the Reformed Hungarian parishes in the world, within the setting of a World Association of Reformed Hungarians.

The Yugoslavian pastors decided to unify their sermons by following the texts indicated for the Sunday in the list of daily Bible readings. As an important innovation the sermons preached by the pastors in one diocese will be discussed by the pastors' association of another diocese, which will enable them to keep a constant check on one another.

At the moment the Pastors' Association of Hungary is studying one of the most important problems facing the Hungarian Reformed Church: that of the conditions of church membership. Bishop Sandor Agoston has sent out a circular letter to all the pastors in his diocese, urging them to follow with close attention the movement of spiritual revival which is taking place within the Reformed Church of Hungary, since the Yugoslavian pastors must not remain outside it.

E.P.S.Geneva

GERMANYCooperation Between the E.K.D. and the Free Churches

In Assenheim at the invitation of the German Evangelical Church, delegates from six other Christian Churches met to discuss the question of cooperation. In free discussion all the participants tried to reach agreement, that Protestant Christians in Germany are unmistakably being admonished by God to assume responsibility for one another and for service to the German people and to the world. In view of this responsibility, and through confidence in the power given by their common Lord, the delegates agreed to recommend to their Churches that they should form a definite basis for cooperation, and prepare a plan for this cooperation without delay.

In addition to the German Evangelical Church, (E.K.D.) the following Churches are taking part in this new joint work: the Free Evangelical Church Association, the Evangelical Association, the Episcopal Methodist Church, the Association of Free Evangelical Churches, the Union of German Mennonites and the Old Catholic Church.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYInduction of Bishop Hahn in the Eastern Zone

The new Bishop of the Province of Saxony, Dr Hugo Hahn, has been inducted at Meissen Cathedral by the President of the Council of the Evangelical Church of Germany, Bishop Wurm. The consecration was carried through by the following clergymen: Dr Erling Eidem, Archbishop of Sweden, Prof. Andres Nygren, of Lund, Dr Bodensieck, representing the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and Bishop Meiser, of Munich, President of the Council of the Lutheran Evangelical Churches in Germany. Dr. Dibelius, Bishop of Berlin, who is abroad at present was represented by some of his cooperators. Some representatives from the other Evangelical provincial Churches also took part in the ceremony, including Bishop Lilje of Hanover.

The ceremony in the Cathedral was followed by speeches of congratulation in the Albrechtsburg, including good wishes from the representative of the Russian Occupying Authority, Lieutenant Kotshetoff, and speeches by Otto Buchwitz, President of the Diet of Saxony, and by Minister-President Max Seydewitz. Both these speeches mentioned the claims of the Saxon Constitution in which freedom of religious practice is guaranteed, and promised to safeguard this freedom at all times.

Dr Bodensieck expressed the congratulations of the representatives of foreign Churches who were present, saying that he was "deeply impressed by the progressive spirit, the realistic courage and the readiness to believe and to suffer, which he had observed in the Churches of the Eastern Zone."

E.P.S. Geneva

BELGIUMProgress in the Work of Church Building

On October 5, the Protestant community of Herstal, Liège, had invited the sister-churches from the whole district to a thanksgiving service, to lay the foundation-stone of the new church. This building is the joint work of a large number of Christians who come to work on it every evening after their ordinary day's work, so as to get the building finished more quickly. In Courcelles a team of volunteers, by sacrificing their holidays have succeeded in repairing the damaged church.

E.P.S. Geneva

